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"Mamma, I have made a discovery about Edward"—p. 21.

JOHN HESKETH'S CHARGE.

BY ALTON CLYDE, AUTHOR OF "UNDER FOOT," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER IV.—THE OLD MAN'S TROUBLE.

IT was a long, low cottage, standing back from the road, and surrounded by a large, rambling garden. With the ivy running riot over its grey walls, and creeping along its roof in luxurious abandonment of

growth, the place looked old enough to have been contemporary even with the building of the church. There was a porch, somewhat rudely constructed of gnarled branches, and overhung by a twining honey-

suckle that converted it into a bower of sweetness. One of the wide, low windows was prettily draped with curtains of white muslin, and ornamented by a green-painted stand of choice geraniums, beyond which was given a tempting glimpse of a table covered with books, and standing in the midst a curious vase of rare old china usually filled with freshly-cut flowers.

There was a primitive simplicity about the cottage, with a blending of refinement that told of educated taste even in the midst of limited means, and the cultivation of those graces of life which are said to belong to its higher social level.

That was the home of Mr. Ashton; he had lived there from the time of his first coming to the village, deservedly winning the respect of all about him, together with the sympathy and regard of several amiable spinsters, who would gladly have relieved the loneliness of the widowed schoolmaster and accepted the honour of second mother to his only daughter. But all those kind intentions were lost upon him; his simple obtuseness being a shield of safety from every feminine arrow that was levelled against him. It might be that his unobtrusive manners and habits of seclusion were against his worldly interest, and prevented him receiving the full measure of appreciation which his talents and acquirements deserved. But it did not trouble him with vain regrets; he still lived his simple life among his books, and worked with his scholars, seeming well content to let things rest as they were. Beside his daughter, the schoolmaster's household included his father—old David Ashton, who had been obliged to leave his farm owing to a succession of heavy losses, the result of failing crops, against which he had battled unsuccessfully.

The three lived happily together. Eva being the light and life of the cottage, each day only served to bind her more closely to the heart of her grandfather, whose sole comfort she seemed to be.

On the evening that the stranger was making his inquiries at the door of the village inn, David Ashton sat in his favourite seat in the porch, the picture of a fine old man, over whom the snows of eighty winters had passed without frosting the kindly nature, or dimming the brightness of the quick, grey eyes. There was not much likeness between him and his son, who was said to resemble the mother whom he had lost in early childhood. The pale, intellectual face of the schoolmaster was cast in a finer mould, and his figure had not the muscular build. Even now there was stronger animal life in the old man of fourscore, whose only infirmity was the lameness which had come upon him during the past few years; his cheeks had a fresh colour like the bloom on a winter apple, and the wrinkled hand that rested on his crutch had still the appearance of sinewy strength. As he had worn through his long life, it seemed likely that he would wear to the end—

a fine type of that perfect physical preservation, which some enviable constitutions retain to the last.

A great brown dog lay at his feet, basking luxuriously in the warm sunlight, and occasionally waking from a half doze to make a futile snap at his enemies, the flies. Rolla was a personage of importance in the cottage; he had come with his old master from the farm, and was always his inseparable companion. Having reached the sober gravity of canine old age, he was petted and made much of by the few who could venture on familiarities with him. In virtue of his long term of faithful service, he was allowed privileges that did not often fall to the lot of dogs.

The old man had been reading. A newspaper lay on the seat beside him, together with his heavy, silver-rimmed spectacles in their old-fashioned horn case. He had lately grown fond of newspapers, and watched for them with an eager interest that sometimes surprised his son. If Mr. Ashton had been observing the old man that evening, he could not have failed to remark a harassed, disappointed look, and a gesture of impatience as he put aside the paper. His face seemed to gather gloom as he sat there thinking, so absorbed that he heeded not the long shadows that were beginning to creep over the grass. Those were the signs from which it might have been inferred that there was a motive for his eager examination of all the newspapers that chance threw in his way; also that his mind had some hidden reserve of trouble, which he was hiding from those he loved.

A growl from the dog suddenly startled him.

"Lie still, Rolla," commanded his master, with a touch of unwonted asperity in his tone.

The dog obeyed, with a deprecating look in his sagacious eyes, but David Ashton took no further notice of his favourite; he went on talking to himself.

"Still no news, yet he promised to keep his word, and, in spite of all, I think he will; but if he should not, what is to be done? I see now it was wrong to hide it from Alfred, for it will come to him sooner or later."

He was again interrupted by a low growl from the dog, and the old man knew from his attitude that some one was approaching. He was right; for a man was passing the high hedge that shut in the garden from the road, and the next moment the gate was swung open, and the stranger, whom Mrs. Grimes had directed to the cottage, was coming up the path.

The dog, standing up beside his master, evidently protested against the intrusion by sundry short, angry barks.

The man opened his interrogations at a safe distance, keeping a wary eye on the dog, and only advancing as far as he judged it prudent.

"Does David Ashton live here?"

"Yes, that is my name; what is your business?"

adding, a little impatiently, "you need not be afraid of the dog; I will take care he does not hurt you."

The man answered by drawing a bulky letter from an inner pocket and handing it to the old man, saying briefly, "This will explain all."

Ten minutes later the schoolmaster was standing by the porch, a bewildered witness of the unexpected scene which had met him on his arrival at the cottage. His father in conference with a stranger, and evidently under the influence of strong agitation, which seemed to have some connection with an open letter which he held in his shaking hands.

The son was not near enough to overhear what was said, but he caught the sound of his father's broken voice, and something in its tone startled him.

Divining that it was not the right moment for him and his friend to present themselves to the old man, John Hesketh made a sign to Edward Arden and created a timely diversion by petitioning Eva to show them over the garden, a relief for which Mr. Ashton was grateful. The next instant he had joined the two figures in the porch, pain and uneasiness taking the place of his first surprise, when he saw his father shrink from his approach, and put his hand over his eyes as if to shut out his look of inquiry, as he said, "Blame me if you will, Alfred; for I know I did wrong in keeping it from you, but I acted for the best."

CHAPTER V.

"MORE HEAD THAN HEART."

LOWFIELD, the home of the Ardens, was considered one of the ornaments of the neighbourhood. The house itself was not large, but the grounds were beautiful and extensive, and laid out with the most perfect taste, no expense having been spared upon their arrangement. As a family residence, Lowfield was all that could be desired; the elegantly furnished rooms might have been art studios as regarded harmony of colour and perfection of detail. Everything was toned down with grace and refinement; there was no obtrusive parade of wealth, only the comfortable assertion of unrestricted means. Few pleasanter places could have been chosen in which to pass a Christmas vacation, or while away a summer holiday.

As a rule, the family lived very quietly. Mrs. Arden was a simple, easy-tempered woman of the purely domestic type, with more heart than head, and owning few ideas or opinions of her own. She had no cravings beyond the little home-world, filled by her husband and children; there lay the boundary-line of her uneventful life, and the limit of its interest and ambition. Her daughter was a character of far different calibre. Caroline was never satisfied with the resources of the neighbourhood in the way of society. Her aspirations went far above anything

that could be furnished either among its local gentry or retired manufacturers from the neighbouring towns, and as she could not command what she wished, she disdained all the social advantages within her reach, to the constant vexation and regret of her more liberal-minded father.

Mrs. Arden sat at one of the drawing-room windows, placidly sewing; her fair complexion, blue eyes, and smooth, regular features were like her son Edward. She was thinking, and, as usual, her thoughts comprised the trifles which made up the sum of her days. As the shadows gathered, and the sunlight fell, she dropped her work, and, crossing her plump, jewelled fingers within each other, rested her fat, white chin upon them, and looked out towards the avenue.

At that moment Mr. Arden and his daughter made their appearance on the scene. The wife and mother watched them with a loving smile as they rode slowly towards the house, dropping their horses to a walking pace on entering the broad drive that wound up to the door. They were apparently in earnest conversation; but judging from external signs the subject was unpleasant to both. Mr. Arden's genial face had an unwonted cloud, and Caroline seemed excited and disturbed; her colour rose as she talked, and now and then her daintily-gloved hand clenched the handle of her riding-whip.

Her father spoke sternly. "I am sorry to hear such opinions from you, Caroline, for in this instance your judgment is as rash as it is unjust; you talk of John Hesketh not being a suitable acquaintance for your brother, not because you know anything to his disparagement, or that he has proved himself unworthy, but simply because he is poor. I said just now that I was sorry to hear your opinions, I ought rather to have told you that I was ashamed that a daughter of mine could lend herself to such narrow views."

The hot flush deepened on the cheek of the proud girl, and if it had not been her father whom she addressed, the bitter sarcasm would have been betrayed more plainly in her answer.

"I need not wonder that the young man has gained such influence over Edward since he has been able to secure so warm an advocate in you. Excuse me, papa, I regret to have these differences of opinion, but I must own that I could never fraternise with that kind of people. They are well enough in their own sphere, and I think it a mistake to let them go beyond. Personally, I have nothing to say against John Hesketh, but I object to him as my brother's companion, for I consider the friendship unequal."

Mr. Arden gave his daughter a searching look that seemed designed to read her inmost thoughts as he said, gravely—

"My dear Caroline, some of our greatest men have risen from the ranks, and John Hesketh's character

is one of no ordinary cast. I contend that he is a fit companion for your brother; upright and honest in his principles, he is a true gentleman at heart, and I am proud of Edward's choice of a friend, just as I should be of yours in another and more serious relation. I mean, my dear, if you placed your affections on some man whom I knew to be thoroughly deserving and entitled to respect for his own sake."

Caroline addressed some pet words to her horse, and played with her bridle; but the light mood was all assumed, for her haughty lip was quivering, and the dark lashes were drooping heavily over her flushed cheeks; perhaps she had private reasons of her own which gave her father's last words a meaning beyond that which lay upon the surface. The next moment she was saying, carelessly, "My dear papa, your views are decidedly unlike those of the generality of anxious fathers, who have usually such prudent ideas on the grave subject of their daughters' settlement in life."

"My dear," interrupted Mr. Arden, "I am afraid you have mistaken me. When I said thoroughly deserving, and entitled to respect for his own sake, I meant you to understand a man of high moral worth, who had won for himself an independence and a good social position; but talking of your brother's friend, Caroline, I should not like to think that you grudged him any attention that Edward may show him, for you cannot forget the debt of gratitude which we all owe to the man who saved your brother's life at the risk of his own."

"No, papa, I do not forget, and I am quite willing to think well of the young man, but I cannot get up enthusiasm enough to make a hero of him."

Her father sighed to himself.

"More head than heart," he said aloud. "You are too cynical for your years, Caroline, you have given me thoughts that seem more like the soured fruit of a lifetime of worldly experience than the fresh impressions of a young heart. It grieves me, child," he added, in a sadder tone, as he laid his hand gently on her arm. "I would rather have you a simple, silly girl, at the mercy of every impulse, so that the impulses were genuine and generous, than what I fear you are becoming—a prematurely developed woman, with all her youthfulness gone before its time, and nothing left but the hard worldly wisdom that only belongs to the wrinkles and grey hair that crown an ill-ordered life."

His daughter did not reply, and they rode on in silence to the door, where a boy was waiting to take charge of their horses.

That evening's ride left its impression on Caroline's mind. More than once while dressing to go down into the drawing-room, when she stood before her toilet glass looking dreamily at the reflection of her beautiful face, she found herself repeating those words: "If you placed your affections on some man

whom I knew to be thoroughly deserving and entitled to respect for his own sake."

"What did papa mean? is it possible that he could be thinking of Lionel Elliott?"

As she whispered this, her dark eyes softened, and a blush drifted into her face, a genuine woman's blush, that gave it the only charm it lacked; but it passed quickly as it came, and she added, with a firm set of her red lips, "No, no, I must keep my resolution; I said I would not indulge that dream, and I must teach myself to forget him."

CHAPTER VI.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

HALF-AN-HOUR'S pleasant gossip with his wife sufficed to clear the cloud from Mr. Arden's face, and smooth away the ruffle of agitation which the talk with his daughter had left there. The most perfect harmony existed between the master and mistress of Lowfield; it was seldom they held contrary opinions, for Mrs. Arden saw with her husband's eyes, and reflected through the medium of his mind; hence it was that they were quoted as an example of conjugal unity and happiness.

As he bent over her, his grave face relaxed into its wonted good humour, and his manner showed more of the playful fondness of their early days. There was no trace left of the serious earnestness which Caroline had roused in him that evening; he smiled and talked, making his wife laugh at his dry jokes and sallies of wit, while he retailed for her amusement all the village news that he thought likely to interest her.

The visit of John Hesketh to the village, and chance meeting with him in the lane, were not forgotten. The young man was a favourite with Mrs. Arden, as he could not fail to be from the fact of his having secured such a high place in her husband's esteem; then her son liked him. Even if he had possessed no other claim, that in itself would have been sufficient to enlist her easily-excited sympathies in his favour. Her interest was roused at once.

"I shall be glad to see John; of course Edward will bring him to Lowfield. Then he will meet Lionel Elliott; it will be so pleasant to see them together, both so clever, you know, only it is such a different sort of cleverness."

"Exactly, my dear Harriet—a different kind of cleverness, that definition just hits the mark. By-the-bye, how do you like Lionel Elliott?"

"Very much, he is always so kind and considerate for others."

"Yes; but that is not the sum of his good qualities. I am convinced that the metal is sterling, and has the true ring; for I have watched him closely since he came to Lowfield."

"It seems very pleasant to have Mr. Elliott

staying in the house," remarked Mrs. Arden, simply, "his society is such an agreeable relief for Carrie and Edward. At first I used to fancy that Carrie did not like him, but now I have altered my opinion."

"Indeed, my dear." Mr. Arden gave his wife an inquiring look, and seemed about to ask questions, but checked himself, and added, "You are right, an agreeable guest is sometimes a very pleasant relief to the monotony of a country house. I am glad that Lowfield chanced to lie so conveniently in our young friend's way while he is on this business tour; for his dead father's sake, as well as his own, I am anxious to see Lionel Elliott rise in the career he has chosen."

A few minutes later Caroline came in, then the lamp was lighted, and the curtains drawn, to the secret disappointment of Mrs. Arden, who would have gladly prolonged the solitary twilight talk with her husband.

He soon after withdrew to the library to write letters which he said would probably occupy him until supper-time. As he passed out, he exchanged a few light words with his daughter, taking that opportunity of attentively observing her. Perhaps he was looking for some shade of thought or expression in which he might trace the effect of their late conversation; but the fine eyes met his look without shrinking, and the handsome face told him nothing. There was none of the sweet, shy, girlish sensitiveness which he longed to see, in place of the perfect, well-governed self-possession which always repelled him in Caroline. He sighed as he closed the door, for though he was a fondly-attached father he could never be blind to his children's faults. With all her beauty, intellect, and grace, his only daughter was a source of keen anxiety to him; and there were times when he wished she had been more like her mother, though he knew her to be neither talented nor clever—in every respect a mediocre woman; but she was lovable, natural, and womanlike—qualities which he held in the highest esteem. His discontent found expression in the words which he murmured to himself—

"I am afraid I don't quite understand Carrie; if I could only see her the wife of a good man who loved her—that is the true influence that would fill her life and make her happy."

The contrast between mother and daughter showed very forcibly when the two were together. Caroline had dressed herself with great care that evening, and, as usual, her dress was admirably chosen and perfect in detail. The flowing silk with the reliefs of costly lace; its colour resembling the soft, delicate tint of a dove's breast; the brooch at her throat, formed of a single ruby of great size and brilliancy, that glowed and flashed like a spark of flame.

She had taken one of the luxurious low chairs that abounded in the room; her white hands daintily mani-

pulating a tiny square of some delicate filmy fabric which she called needlework.

Mrs. Arden watched her with eyes full of motherly pride, but the fair face was a shade less bright than it had been an hour ago; there was still a smile dimpling the soft, flexible mouth; yet she looked less at ease, and it seemed as if the chill of a colder air had crept in with her stately daughter.

It was Mrs. Arden who opened the conversation.

"You have had a delightful evening for your ride, my dear."

Caroline gave a monosyllabic assent, without raising her eyes from her work.

"Your father tells me you met John Hesketh, and that he was looking very well."

"Yes, we met him; about his looks I cannot say anything, for as I did not feel interested in the subject, I noticed him very little."

Something in her daughter's manner puzzled Mrs. Arden, but not having the talent of analysing things that did not present themselves clearly to her perceptions, she contented herself with the decision that it was only Carrie's way. She resumed, "Your father said that Edward was with him."

"Yes, of course; Edward was sure to be John Hesketh's attendant satellite. Then there was the schoolmaster and his daughter with them. They formed quite a party."

"Where were they going, my dear?"

"To Mr. Ashton's cottage, I believe," adding in a tone too low to be heard by her mother, "and I know one who would be only too glad to avail himself of the opportunity."

"I wonder when Edward will bring his friend to Lowfield."

"Are you anxious that he should, mamma?"

"Yes; I always like John Hesketh, and I think, Carrie, we should show ourselves very ungrateful if we did not welcome the one to whom Edward owes his life."

Even with Caroline this last argument was unanswerable, and she was obliged to concede the point, but she did it ungraciously. There was a pause which she broke by saying, "Mamma, I have made a discovery about Edward."

"A discovery, Carrie! what do you mean?"

"That the visit of John Hesketh is not the only attraction that keeps Edward in the village. He has another feeling even stronger than his liking for his friend's society; it is as yet in its early stage, but I fear the fancy will grow upon him. You have heard of the schoolmaster's daughter?"

"What, Eva Ashton, who lost her mother when quite a child; little Eva who has grown so pretty?"

Caroline had dropped her work, letting it lie unheeded on the carpet at her feet; there was excitement in her manner as she rose from her chair, losing not an inch of her stately height. She gave

her mother a half-pitying glance as she said, "It is true, mamma; I am giving you no idle supposition of my own. Edward is losing his heart to that girl whom you think so pretty."

There was not a word of comment from Mrs. Arden, who sat still with a surprised look in her gentle eyes. The daughter repressed a gesture of impatience and went on: "I know that I have no right to interfere, that rests only with you and papa; but I am anxious to know whether you would like to receive that same Eva Ashton as the future

mistress of Lowfield, and the wife of your only son."

At that moment an approaching step was heard in the passage. Caroline had just time to snatch up her work and resume her seat, shifting her chair so that her back was to the door, and her flushed face partially screened from observation. Her mother was about to speak, but she held up a warning finger, saying hastily, "Hush, mamma! it is Mr. Elliott; he is coming in."

(To be continued.)

THE FEET OF JESUS.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE 'I WILLS' OF THE PSALMS," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.—THE FEET OF JESUS THE PLACE FOR HELPLESS MISERY.

"And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them."—Matt. xv. 30.

THE head of Jesus was crowned with thorns on earth; it is crowned with glory in heaven: and in either aspect we feel that it is a subject far beyond our grasp. It moves our feelings, it excites our admiration, and we wonder and adore where we cannot understand.

But the feet of Jesus! those feet which were weary, which were dust-soiled, which moved about the common haunts of man; perhaps we think we understand more of them. It may be that we do "more," but not "all." We do not understand all about any one footprint which he left on earth. There are reasons why he went to this place and to that; and why he left it, far beyond our ken. Yes; take any one footprint; see in it the earth or the dust of a fallen world bearing the impress of the foot of the Son of God made man; how comes that footmark there? What is the very first origin of it? what is the full extent of its meaning? There is no human intellect which can reach to this.

There are in this matter hidden things which belong to God; but there are also things revealed, which belong to us and to our children—things which intertwine themselves with our present position, with our daily need, with Christ's relationship to us, and ours to him. It is upon such we desire to dwell in these papers. We feel that we need the Spirit's guidance, to teach us so much as the least thing about even the Feet of Jesus.

In this great gathering, of which St. Matthew here speaks, we have the feet of Christ presented to us as the place for helpless misery—the place of simple pity. This scene is an epitome of the history of our Lord. Multitudes of diseased are on one side—himself, the solitary Healer, on the other; they are cast at Jesus' feet, and he healed them. The feet of Jesus was the place for all

this helpless misery; there it found simple pity; and in that pity a supply for all its need.

When I see, then, all these people cast at the feet of Jesus, and lying there, the thoughts which I have are these:—

1. I see him the well-defined centre of a circle, with an undefined circumference. I am glad that we are not told exactly how many were healed, and that we have not a perfect catalogue of the diseases under which they were suffering. I like to think what a vast number that "many others" may include—to think that from north, south, east, west, the miserable people all came. So large is the circle of human misery, that no human mind can even imagine its outer limits. We think, perhaps, that we know a good deal of deep heart-sinkings and sorrows ourselves; but, ah! others have them far deeper than ours; they are exercised on subjects and in ways that we have not an idea of, and in the vast sweep of all this misery stands Jesus the Healer—his feet are in the centre.

"Many others" were cast down at his feet. There is great beauty and use in the indefiniteness of Scripture—"Whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely;" "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden." It is meant to bring to the feet of Jesus all people ever so far off—people who otherwise never would have imagined that they might venture. The feet of Jesus is the place for all helpless misery—yours and mine, and "many others'."

But, in the matter of Christ, it is above all things necessary that everything should be very precise; therefore, "Come unto me." Therefore the sick were cast at his very feet. Christ entered the circle of misery for a purpose—that he might draw the miserable to him. He stands, he sits, he walks in it, that he might be near people. His holy feet are down in our earth-dust, that

creeping, or lying helpless, or cast down almost in despair, we may be near some part of him; and to be near any part of Jesus is to be near healing and life. That woman who touched the hem of his garment bent close to his foot, and even there found all that she required.

2. I think that Jesus is a gatherer in of human misery. It was to be such an ingatherer that he came on earth—that was his one object; to fit himself for that he became man at all, and lived, and died. And here, he was a man above men. What most desire is, to ingather gain—for that they live, for that too often toil until they die. They desire to throw off misery; it is troublesome and expensive, and perhaps distressing to them; and what they throw off, Jesus takes. If we, then, are miserable in any way, and know not whither to go, or on whom to lay our load, let us bethink ourselves quickly of the ingatherer of sorrows. Did not his feet travel, when on earth, to the abode of illness and of death? did they not stand still, when he was cried after? He never used those, his human feet, to run from misery, or like the priest and Levite to pass by on the other side; but he stood, and walked in misery's way.

Now we must lay this to heart. When we are miserable we must not say, "Where shall I go for sympathy? who will pity me? who will understand me, or my sorrow, or my case?" Behold, the ingatherer of all human misery is walking close by you; there is no path of sorrow which does not bear an imprint of his foot.

3. I have also a thought concerning the pool of Bethesda. There a multitude were waiting, and only one could be healed. There was no eye of sympathy to look upon the afflicted, no voice to speak to them; each man, forgetful of perhaps the greater woes of others, absorbed only in his own, rushed forward, if possible, to be the first into the troubled waters; and so reap the solitary blessing which the pool contained.

Here, on this mountain-side, sits Jesus. There is no troubling here; there need not be. Whatever troubling there is, is always on man's side. With him all is calm. We see in our mind's eye the multitudes toiling up the mountain-side; the eagerness, the anxiety, the casting down at Jesus' feet, and beautifully simple is all that we have told us of what he did; "he healed them all." Those simple words, no doubt, fitly express the calm with which he wrought upon the mass of misery prostrate at his feet.

4. And I think that, in truth, there lay before Jesus, if we might be bold enough to say so, no alternative but to heal them all.

The only alternative was to get up and go away; or tell the people who brought their loved sick ones, to take them back again unhealed; but what

an alternative would that have been to him. He could never have done this.

So, then, when we cast down our sorrows, or ourselves, or our friends' sorrows, or ourselves, right at the feet of Christ, let us think, "He cannot go away from them." This is no presumption, no lowering of Jesus, no detracting from his power; but it is a holy faith and courage to have such a thought, and it is greatly honouring to him. What would become of us, if it had been even once recorded that Jesus was too busy to attend to such and such a person, or that he refused any one, and sent him away unhealed? No doubt Satan would say, "Ah, that case is just like yours;" or our own poor mistrusting hearts would be sure to fix upon it, and to feel, "So and so was sent away; ah! my experience may be the same."

But Jesus, owing to the blessed pitifulness of his nature, cannot go on—no, not a single step, if a helpless, suffering being, willing to be healed, is cast in faith athwart his path. He is rooted and bound by misery. Such is his blessed human nature, that if he were obliged to spurn the miserable from his feet, or to go away from them, he would be miserable himself.

In our sorrow, then, let us look at Christ tied and bound by the laws of his own loving nature; let us put the power of those laws against our own fears, and the repulsiveness of our sins; and faith will strengthen itself, and lay many people and many sorrows at the feet of Jesus.

5. Further, I think of the helpless misery of that crowd cast down at Jesus' feet. Lying there, they suggest the thought that conscious helplessness has in itself power with Jesus. Coming so closely in the sacred narrative upon the impassioned entreaty of the Syro-Phœnician woman at the feet of Jesus (which has a lesson of its own), it seems to have a special teaching. For many might say, "We cannot plead as she did." Diffident of their own earnestness and energy; and seeing how much was won by the Syro-Phœnician woman by the exercise of these qualities, they might say, "If Christ has to be so hardly entreated, then what can we hope to get—we who are feeble, who seem as though we are not wise enough to use arguments which can reach his head, or strong enough to utter cries which can pierce his heart?" We need only read on a little further; and behold the multitudes simply lying at his feet.

These sick people thus lying at Jesus' feet have a voice to us—their helplessness speaks to ours; it says, "Perhaps you cannot address arguments like the Syro-Phœnician woman to the head of Christ, or, it may be, are dull in pleading with the affections of his heart; then do not consider that all is over—that there is nothing for you; do not depress yourself with what you cannot do; think

rather of what you can. You can lie before Jesus, where he must see you; you are very close to him, when you are at his feet."

In common, everyday life men are frequently losing gain which they might have had, while aiming at something higher which they cannot have; so is it in the spiritual life too. While aiming at what is much higher than we at present have capacity for, we miss what is within our reach.

We must not fret ourselves that we have not attained to this or that energy of spiritual life, and shut out the comfort of knowing that we have "something"—that we are at the Saviour's feet. Satan would hide from us that we are there; for he knows that none tarry long there in humble waiting, without being lifted up and given strength.

If the reader feels very helpless, let him not flee from this thought, but use it; and the way he is to use it is this. He is to stay still where he is—not to want to move at all—not to be restless; Jesus sees him, that is enough.

6. Now I think how beautifully simple everything is here; the few and unadorned words in which this great transaction is recorded lead us to thoughts of simplicity. There is simple trust on the part of the afflicted people, and those who brought them; and simple pity on the part of Jesus.

Blessed be God for all the simplicity in the gospels; it is as little children we must receive the kingdom of heaven, and simple food suits the infancy of the soul—ay, and its ripe old age. For when many things have been learned about types and prophecies, and many speculations have been made, and systems of theology constructed, what does the soul fall back upon when in view of eternity, but just the simple truth of "Jesus dead,

and alive again for us?" That was what made a prelate eminent in learning and controversy say, in extreme old age, and in his dying hours, "Don't talk to me of the cross, but of the One that hung upon the cross."

This was no distinction without a difference. The cross had clinging to it more of a complex creed. The One who hung upon it (though his hanging there involved the creed) was what the soul needed; there were the very feet, at which it could lie.

Let us say to ourselves and to others, What is needed for healing is not many thoughts, or high thoughts, about Jesus, or any intellectual knowledge about him at all, but the plainest simplicity of trust; and it will be very helpful if we see that the like simplicity is in him. Simple pity! that is what we are to look for from Jesus. We need not connect it with any theological thoughts; it is a pure uncompounded feeling; and where shall we see it exercised as on those who are cast at his feet?

Let us learn, then, the value of bringing our afflicted ones to the feet of Christ, feeling we can do no more than that. We have perhaps tried many physicians with them, and they are no better but rather the worse. Kindness has not melted them, punishment has not corrected them, discipline has not restrained them. We must now not "cast them off," but "cast them down" at the feet of Jesus. And having done this, we must not yield to desponding feelings of helplessness. We are now really nearer to being helped than ever we were before. We are now in the right place before Christ—in the right position—that of expectancy, with the right feelings—those of self-helplessness, and yet hope. Who knows how soon you will say, "We cast them down at Jesus' feet, and he healed them?"

A DREAM AT EVENING-TIME.

LITTLE, wilful ward of mine,
Would thy guardian old
Could in threefold cord entwine
Love, and fame, and gold!
Love that time shall never mar,
Fame, whose clarion sounds from far,
Gold without alloy;
Fingers deft should deck thy brow
With a wreath unknown till now—
Crowning life with joy.

I may love thee—ay, forsooth,
Do—and, day by day,
Watch thy sweet, unclouded youth
From my turret grey;
But 'tis vain for sage like me

E'er to hope to mate with thee,
Gentle summer bird!
I must mope in ivied tower,
Owl-like, through each noontide hour,
Plaint and sigh unheard.
Thou—ah, well, fair Lily Hyde!
Brighter destiny
Than to be an old man's bride
Yet awaiteth thee;
But the treasure of thy love,
Were it e'er my bliss to prove—
Were it "mine to keep"—
I would guard the casket rare,
Though the gem I might not wear,
Save when mortals sleep.



"—And day by day
Watch thy sweet, unclouded youth
From my turret grey"—p. 24.

I should be a miser cold,
 Darling Lily, then—
 Win my wealth "to have and hold"
 Far from human ken;
 And my spirit could not brook
 Earthly presence, speech, or look,

Near my gentle bride!

* * * * *
 Do I dream? To-night we part;
 Yet I'll keep thee in my heart,
 Lovely Lily Hyde.

R. A.

A WORD UPON FURNISHING.

BY THE REV. W. M. STATHAM.

WONDER how it is that the mention of this word "furnishing" suggests chiefly carpets, cabinets, and crockery. It seems strange that so narrow a use of the word should be the conventional one, and that we should at once think of a furnished house rather than a furnished mind. If one was cynically disposed, the suggestion would naturally arise that society cares more for comfortable habitations than for cultured hearts. When we speak of a place being badly furnished, the most deplorable images rise up in the mind—frayed-out curtains, battered chairs, and patternless carpets, come uppermost in thought; but badly furnished applies as truly sometimes to heads and hearts as it does to hearths and homes. Furnishing of all kinds is difficult work, and there is always much more to do than you anticipate at first. Take your house, for instance. Say you are a wise man, and resolve to buy the best. Supposing that you have heard how the castors of your friend B.'s sofa broke the first week, and the legs of his dining-room table came unglued the second week, and how the springs of his drawing-room chairs came through the rep, with a sudden whizz, the third week—well; you learn by experience. You put cheap furniture out of the question, and you furnish well. Be it so. You set the expense down at a good round sum, and you spend it; you stick the last bill on your file in triumph, and you're ready. Aye, ready! So you think. But, as in print "etcetera" embodies more than the preceding words, so in furnishing, it is the "etceteras" that do for you. The positive necessities unprovided for constitute quite a revelation to you and yours. You naturally thought you were completely furnished, and now you find that furnishing is just one of those extraordinary things that "no fellow can understand." Another secret, too, comes out: there is a perpetual renewing. You should open a "wear and tear and depreciation" account the first moment you set foot in your house. The smashing epidemic sets in; your suburban house-raid, in her own expressive dialect, tells you that "There's no holdin' them hallabaster images when your hands is shaky."

Furnishing is never a finished work; and, on one side of the subject, a little philosophy will show us that even breakages are not wholly evil. Fancy the tea-service of your thirteenth grandmother preserved intact to the present day! Why, the European crockery business would be a most limited affair. There is a cheering side to the situation even, when the jagged oil-cloth trips up John Thomas Plush in the hall. I am quite willing to admit that, in a recumbent position, with turtle-soup and turbot covering him, J. T. P. has suffered as much in dignity as in cleanly comfort; but the concussion between the soup-tureen and the side-dishes will help in the boarding-school education of the crockery-shop daughters in the side street. It is evidently for the good of society that J. T. P. took a sudden survey of the hall ceiling. I repeat the fact, to which this illustration points—furnishing never ends.

It is so in a mental and moral sense; and it is good here, also, that furnishing should be a perpetual work. I can imagine no more pitiable case of conceitedness than the spectacle of a young girl fresh from the finishing-school, or a youth who has completed his college curriculum, thinking that education is over. Nor can I conceive, in the sphere of moral life, of a sincerely earnest Christian thinking that a first knowledge of Christ as a Saviour is enough for the necessities of the soul. There is always untrodden ground for the Christian to explore, in studying the Revelation of God; there are always unoccupied heights for the Christian's wing to soar to—loftier communings with God than he has ever known; there are always fountains of consolations to be opened up from the Divine promises, and mines of fresh thought to be reverently followed up. Then, there is much not only to learn of Christian doctrine, but much room for growth in all the quiet virtues of the Christian life. Just as the true scholar only knows enough to feel his ignorance, so a true Christian feels how feeble is his faith, how cold his zeal, how indifferent his best efforts after the Divine life.

Most pleasant, indeed, it is to meet with people

who are always furnishing; you cannot spend any length of time with them without having your fountains of thought and feeling refreshed and fed. Some people never seem to improve; meet them when you will, they are just the same. They remind me, in a mental sense, of those musical boxes which, when wound up, go through a certain set of tunes. When you know such people well enough, you have only to touch a certain spring, and they play the old tune again with considerable vivacity. On the other hand, it is exceedingly refreshing—I know nothing more so—than to have an hour or two's stroll on the beach, or up through the shady avenue, with a thoughtful, *growing* mind—a mind that can give you of its own rich treasures. Have you never thought what a poor thing it is to be obliged to please men with wines and rich viands and mere house-furnishings? It certainly is unworthy of us to be obliged to occupy the position of picture and furniture showmen in our own houses—to take people through, to show them our coins, our Dresden china, and this, which was our grandmother's—and then to be dependent for amusing and entertaining them on dinner-spreads and drives. All well, perhaps, if we have nothing else; but better far if we can give them of ourselves. Money is a most useful thing—hard enough to get, and easy enough to spend—but it is a poor enough possession without mind. Men cannot be everlastingly building wings to their houses, and constructing new entrance-lodges, and selecting good wines. Life becomes very tiresome indeed, if they cannot enjoy reading and thinking. The rich Romans were wise in this respect; they invited wits, poets, and philosophers to their sumptuous boards; they found it impossible to do without somebody else's mind, even if they lacked such a possession themselves. But they did not invite them as doing them an honour, but as securing one for themselves. I am quite willing to admit that, given a cultured mind, money can supply it with wonderful satisfactions; and that by reading, art, and travel it can enrich life in multitudes of ways. Let, however, the mind be furnished well. Years ago, how costly a thing a thorough education was! now, the best literature is within the reach of all. Grammar-schools are being restored to their original uses, and, as at King's College, evening classes are opened for the culture of the many. The lamp of knowledge, which, in the mediæval days, swung only at the girdle of the priest, may now be the possession of all. If, for instance—to take the multitude of lads in towns and cities—if the squandered littles were spent by them in securing some comprehensive and complete educational work, they might become rich indeed in the acquisition of stores of knowledge.

I am quite willing to admit that mental furnishing will not suffice; there are other rooms in the great mansion of man's nature which need attention: there is a secret pavilion in the soul of each believer, into which God himself enters and dwells. True, the condescension is wonderful, but the greatness of the condescension must not make us doubtful of the reality of the fact. "Will God in very deed dwell with man upon the earth?" We know the true answer to that old prophetic question: it is met in Christ—"I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." When we read the apostolic precepts, too, we feel how far short we come of the complete furnishing. "Add to your faith, virtue; to your virtue, temperance; to your temperance, brotherly love," &c. Why, it is just here that we fail. We are most of us content with certain pet virtues, to the exclusion of other aspects of the Christian life. "That we may be thoroughly furnished" is the injunction of Scripture—the very word chosen for the title of this paper.

England has improved! Think what an advance there is in the England of to-day over the England of the early centuries. Parchment windows; no chimneys, but openings in the roof; straw to sleep upon; sanded floors instead of carpets. What days were these! Why, the humblest cottage in the land, where there exists a careful housewife, has "fixings," as the Americans call them, which are quite luxuries compared with many of the arrangements of our forefathers. I certainly need not stay to show how education, or mental furnishing, has advanced—the circulating libraries are open for a reading public everywhere, and a good private library can be procured by the expenditure of a very small amount of capital. Amid much, too, that is deplorable in our national history, in a moral sense there *is* improvement—bull-baiting, cock-fighting, and even prize-fighting are not tolerated now. It has been said of the old empires, specially of Rome, that mental elevation and moral deterioration went hand in hand. A sadder fact could scarcely be written. Let us hope that in our land mental culture and moral improvement will co-exist. It is manifestly possible to have a clever and cultured intellect with a debased and lustful heart; nor can those be right who think that mere mental culture will elevate humanity by and of itself.

In closing this Word upon Furnishing, I should like to say there is such a thing as "unfurnishing." As taste improves, bad carvings, &c., become unbearable, and some articles have to leave the house in a van, at what is called "a nominal price." So also in the mental culture: bad fingering at the piano, and bad pronunciation in French, have to be undone; and this *is* hard work indeed. It is easier to fill an empty vase

than to get the scent out of an old one. To begin well is half the battle in education. The same remark applies to morals. "I cannot afford," said a wise writer, "to read books wherein I make the acquaintance of the devil." This is difficult—unfurnishing. You can, at a great sacrifice, turn

out at once chiffoniers and cabinets that are inferior and out of taste; but you cannot turn out sharply and suddenly old occupants of the memory. Therefore, let every man take care how he furnishes—house, head, and heart. Let him try in each case to furnish well.

A LESSON OF OBEDIENCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A VERY SIMPLE STORY," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.

T WAS on a lovely evening towards the end of August that some children were playing together in one of the squares at Brighton. The square was very full, and there were many other groups of children scattered about in different parts; some playing at croquet, others at "Tom Titler's ground;" and others at the popular square-game, "Flags." But the group first mentioned, had a big indian-rubber ball, which they were throwing from one to the other. It was a very large ball indeed, almost as much as the youngest of them, a little boy of five, could hold. His brother and sister, who looked about seven and nine years old respectively, were very kind to the little fellow, and often pretended to let it slip out of their hands that he might have a chance of catching it sometimes. Their governess was sitting under a tree reading, for the children played so happily together that she could enjoy her book without interruption.

This was not the case all over the square, I am sorry to say. Among some of the groups a quarrel arose every now and then; and an appeal to a mother, or nurse, or governess had to be made before the game could be resumed.

From the croquet players came such expressions as: "That's not fair! you pushed." "It's not through the hoop!" "Yes it is." "You needn't have sent me *quite* so far!" &c. &c. And from the other games, such shouts as: "I touched you, and you pulled your frock out of my hand!" or, "You're caught!" or, "You're not released, because you wern't standing in the right place; it's not fair!"

But the group of fair-haired children never quarrelled, though they laughed and shouted quite as much as the rest. In the middle of their game, the square-gate nearest to them opened, and a lady and gentleman and two little girls came in. They did not seem to know any of the people in the square, for they stood watching the games for a few minutes, and then walked along the gravel path. The youngest walked between her father and mother, talking quietly to them; but the eldest fell back, and cast a longing glance at all the happy groups playing about on the grass. She was par-

ticularly attracted by the three fair-haired children with the indian-rubber ball, and stood watching them with eager eyes as they kicked it about and made it bound in the air. She was about eight years old, and had bright eyes and dark hair. Restless eyes they were—eyes that took in everything at a glance, and were all over the square in a moment. She stood still for a few minutes, and then ran after her father and mother.

"Mamma," she called out, "please stop a moment, I want to speak to you."

Mr. and Mrs. Fielding turned round, and waited until she came up.

"Mamma," she said eagerly, "*may* I ask those little children to let me play with them?"

"My dear child," answered her mother, "you know very well that I never let you play with children that I do not know."

"But, mamma," persisted Alice, "they are such very nice little children; and I am sure you would like to know them."

"I have no doubt, dear," said Mrs. Fielding, "that they are very nice children; but then, you see, I do not know who they are."

"But I will ask them, if you like," said Alice, eagerly. "I don't the least mind asking them their names."

"I dare say not," said her father, laughing; "but I think they would consider you a very rude little girl. And what would their governess say, I wonder, to a strange child running up to them and saying 'What's your name?' No—no, Alice, I could not think of letting you do such a thing. Come along, and walk with us."

"It is so dull, walking along the path," grumbled Alice; "and that is the *jolliest* game of all."

"Constance does not find it dull," said Mr. Fielding; "she is quite happy walking with us—are you not, Constance?" and, taking his youngest daughter's hand as he spoke, they all walked on.

"It is rather dull for them, without any companions," said Mrs. Fielding to her husband, "and rather hard to see all these games going on, without joining in them; but I suppose the Conynghams will call in a day or two."

"Yes, I should think so," he answered; "and their children must be about the age of ours."

"What did you say, mamma?" asked Constance; "what children?"

"Your Aunt Mary has some friends here," answered Mrs. Fielding; "and she said she would write and tell them we were coming. So I dare say you will have some companions soon."

Alice had remained behind, and had not heard this conversation, but on Constance turning round and saying her mamma had got something to tell her, she came running up.

"I was saying you would have some playfellows soon," said Mrs. Fielding; and she repeated what she had just told Constance about the little Conynghams.

But Alice was in a discontented frame of mind, and she would not see any comfort in the prospect. She was quite sure she should not like the little Conynghams; she would rather not know them. She only wanted to know the fair-haired children, and if she might not play with them, she would rather play by herself.

"Very well," said her mother, "you needn't play with the poor little Conynghams unless you like; but I think you are in a great hurry to say you will not like them. You had better wait until you know them."

But Alice was quite sure she should never care for them. They would be covered with freckles, she knew, and have dark hair, and, in fact, be as unlike the fair-haired children as possible.

"Papa," she entreated, "do just come and see them playing, I am sure you will like them. And won't you come, mamma?"

Mrs. Fielding was tired, so she sat down on a seat with Constance, and Alice and her father walked off together.

The indian-rubber ball game was still going on, and Mr. Fielding acknowledged that it was a very merry game, and that they were very dear little children; but still he was not, as Alice had secretly hoped, so much overcome by their appearance as to give her leave to play with them.

She kept him there as long as she could, hoping to the last he would suddenly relent; but after a while he said it was time to be going, and very unwillingly Alice was carried off to join her mother and sister.

They met them coming along the path, and Mrs. Fielding said they must be going home. Her husband unlocked the square-gate, and held it open for them to pass through. Alice was the last to go out and even then was looking longingly back to the children by whom she had been so much attracted.

Their house was nearly opposite the gate, and they had only just to walk across the road, and open the door, for doors are seldom kept locked at Brighton.

On the hall-table were some cards and a note, and Mrs. Fielding read out loud the names Mr. and Mrs. Conyngham.

"There, children," she said, "you have not had to wait long," and she added as she opened and read

the note, "Mrs. Conyngham asks me to bring one of my little girls to-morrow to make acquaintance with her children."

"Only one," said Constance with a little sigh—she knew the rule of "eldest first"—"then I suppose it will be Alice."

"Well, it would naturally be Alice, of course, but as she seems to have taken such a violent dislike to the little Conynghams, I suppose she will not care to go—eh, Alice?"

Alice did not answer; she was looking at the cards.

"I'm sure she's not a nice person," she said; "her cards are not thick, like mamma's; they are horrid thin things, like paper; and if she's not nice, I'm sure her children won't be nice."

"I don't think that follows, Alice," said her father, "at least, I know little girls with nice mamma's, who are anything but nice themselves sometimes."

Alice felt rather shy, for she guessed what the papa meant, and she went to the hall-window, for she knew she was going to blush.

Just as she got there, she heard merry voices, and the fair-haired children passed along the pavement on their way home. The eldest boy was carrying her camp-stool for her, the little girl was carrying the book, and the small boy was weighed down by the indian-rubber ball. They were talking and laughing with their governess in French, and making plans for the next day. Alice heard them say they would be able to build sand castles in the morning, because the tide would be so far out.

How delicious it sounded! and, oh! if only she could go and build sand castles with them.

She remained gazing out of the window long after they had gone by.

"Well, Alice," said her mother, "I am waiting to know if you want to go with me to-morrow."

"No, thank you, mamma," said Alice, turning round, and speaking very decidedly, "I am more than ever sure that I shall never care to know the little Conynghams."

CHAPTER II.

It was a lovely bright morning next day, and the little Fieldings went down to the beach directly after breakfast. Their mamma bought them some spades on the way, as is the usual custom the first morning at the sea-side.

The first thing that Alice's eyes fell upon were the three fair-haired children, playing all together as before. They had tied a string round the same indian-rubber ball, and were throwing it out as far as they could in the sea. Then they held the string tight, while the waves washed the ball gradually up on the shore. At a little distance the string could not be seen, and Alice thought at first they were throwing the ball recklessly in the water, and could not imagine how it always came safely back.

"What delicious games they do have!" she sighed.

"Who, dear?" asked Mrs. Fielding.

"Why, the same little boys and girl that I want to know so much," returned Alice, despondently.

"Come and play, Ally," said Constance; "we'll have a very nice game."

Alice was not much inclined to at first, but the new spade and beach-basket tempted her at last, and she joined her sister in digging holes in the shingle, and filling the beach-baskets with the prettiest little stones that they could find.

The tide was going gradually out, and the sand beginning to appear. As soon as it was dry enough to stand on, the fair-haired children left off their game, and began to build a castle on the sand.

At this sight, Alice got disgusted with her own game, and her longing eyes watched every movement of the children with the keenest interest. Constance tried to recall her attention in vain. Alice imperceptibly began to move away from her sister, and to get nearer to the other children.

Constance was rather disconsolate at being left to play alone; but after calling to her sister once or twice, and seeing it was of no use, she gave it up, and went on digging by herself.

By-and-by, Mr. Fielding came down on the beach, and carried his wife off for a little walk on the Esplanade.

"The children will be quite safe here," he said, "and we shall see them from the top of the cliff."

Constance felt a little forlorn when they were out of sight, and looked anxiously after Alice. She was a good way off now, for she was standing between the sea and the place where the children were building their castle. She was getting closer and closer to them, and Constance thought she must be talking to them, she seemed so very near. But she went on with her game at last, for she saw it was no use waiting for her sister, and she began making a sand roley-poley-pudding, and sticking little stones in to look like currants. She was rather pleased with it when it was finished, it looked so like a real pudding, and she cut quite thin slices off it with her spade. She could see her papa and mamma sitting on a seat on the Esplanade, so she felt quite happy, particularly when they kissed their hands and nodded to her.

All of a sudden, somebody rushed past her and plunged down on the shingle. Constance was much startled, for the person, whoever it was, brushed so roughly up against her, that she was almost knocked over. She turned round, and saw to her astonishment that it was Alice! Alice, with a very red face, and rather sparkling eyes, sitting on the beach, throwing the pebbles about, and looking very much put out.

"Oh, Ally! how you made me jump!" she exclaimed, running up to her sister. "Why, what is the matter?"

But Alice would not tell her, and seemed very excited.

"What's become of mamma?" she asked.

"She's up there," said Constance, pointing to the Esplanade.

"Up where?" exclaimed Alice, jumping up from her seat; "show me, quick, Constance!"

Constance pointed to the seat on the Esplanade, where Mr. and Mrs. Fielding were still sitting, and repeated, "Up there, with papa."

Alice got very red, and looked rather frightened.

"Why do you blush, so?" inquired Constance.

Alice would not say at first, but Constance begged her so hard to tell her that she yielded at last, and confessed what had happened.

It seemed that when she first went towards the fair-haired children she had only meant to watch their game for a minute, and then return to her sister; but the nearer she got, the more delicious did the game appear. They had made a lovely castle of sand, with pebbles all round the tops of the walls; and just as she came up, they were making little holes for guns. There was a little moat all round for water, and every wave that broke on the shore helped to fill it. They were settling together that they would put the indian-rubber ball on the top for a sort of dome, and the youngest boy ran off to the beach where his governess was sitting, to fetch it.

It was just then that Alice thought she would go and stand on the other side, to see how the castle would look from the sea. When she got there, she perceived for the first time that Constance was playing alone on the sand in the distance, and that her mamma was nowhere to be seen.

The temptation to join the children's game had been very strong before, and now it became stronger than ever.

Alice was not naturally disobedient, and at first she violently repelled the thought; but when they stuck the ball on the top of the castle, with a flag on a stick in the little hole, and all shouted, "Hurrah!" she could not help saying "hurrah," too; it did look so very jolly.

"Now we must storm the castle!" said the eldest boy, and they began throwing stones against the sand walls.

This was too much; Alice could stand it no longer, and she ran up to the children and said, "Oh! may I help you to knock it down?"

The little girl looked rather surprised, and then drawing herself up, she said very civilly, but very decidedly, "We are not allowed to play with anybody mamma does not know."

The words were hardly out of her mouth before Alice turned round and ran back to Constance as hard as she could, her cheeks burning, and something very like tears glistening in her eyes. Never in all her life had she felt so disgraced. She fancied, as she ran, that she heard the children laughing at her, and, hurried as she was, she could not help turning round to see if they were looking after her;

but they were only storming the castle and laughing over their game.

When she came up to Constance, playing so quietly and happily with her roley-poley pudding, she wished heartily she had never left her—for what good had she done? She had lost all her fun with her sister—for it was nearly time to go home; she had been refused by the fair-haired children; and, worse than all, she had disobeyed her mother and father, and they would probably be very much displeased with her.

It was a sad business, certainly, and Constance did not know what to say to comfort Alice, when she had finished her story.

The little girls were still talking it over when they heard their father calling them from the steps to come home. Constance ran towards him, and Alice followed slowly, feeling very much ashamed of herself.

"Well," said Mr. Fielding, "and how have you enjoyed your morning?"

Alice did not answer, for she didn't know what to say; but Constance was full of all the fun she had had on the sand.

"But how came you to leave poor Constance all alone, Alice?" asked her mother.

Alice hung her head, and got very red indeed.

"I've got something to tell you, mamma," she said, in a very low voice.

"Would you rather wait till we get home?" asked Mrs. Fielding, for she saw how very shaky Alice was, and she was rather afraid of a scene on the Esplanade.

"Oh no," said Alice, "I can't wait; I'd much rather tell you at once. Mamma, I've been very disobedient, and I've done what you told me not, for I went and asked those little children to let me play with them;" and Alice looked up anxiously in her mother's face to see if she was very angry.

But Mrs. Fielding only answered very quietly, "I am glad you are honest about it, Alice, for it would have been no use trying to hide it, as I was watching you the whole time."

"And were you very angry, mamma?" faltered Alice.

"I was more surprised than angry," answered her mother. "I did not think you would have so flatly disobeyed me. Your father could hardly believe his eyes when he saw you go up to the little girl."

Alice's eyes filled with tears, but before she had time to answer, her mother went on: "But what did the little girl say, Alice; and what made you run away so quickly?"

Alice's face worked with several conflicting feelings, and the answer was so low that her mother could hardly catch it.

Mrs. Fielding did not say anything more. She knew what a proud child Alice was, and felt that her wounded vanity was punishment enough.

Alice felt very much humbled and very penitent, and they walked home in silence.

CHAPTER III.

"WELL," said Mr. Fielding, at luncheon, "who is to come with us to see the little Conynghams?"

"Constance," answered his wife. "Alice has made up her mind she does not want to know them."

Alice felt rather sorry, when she saw them all start, that she had been so hasty in settling she would not go; for it was very dull to be left all alone; and she stood watching them from the window, feeling rather forlorn. She did not exactly know what to do with herself while they were away, and the time seemed very long indeed. It must have been nearly an hour and a half before she heard the hall door open, and her father's and mother's voices. She ran down to meet them.

"Well," said Mr. Fielding, "and what have you been doing with yourself all the afternoon?"

"I've been very dull indeed," answered Alice. "I'm so glad you've come home. But where's Constance?"

"She is going to stay to tea with the little Conynghams," answered her mother. "I don't think she will be back till bed-time."

"Oh dear, what a bother!" said Alice, "I shall have no one to play with all day."

"And I'm afraid no one to walk with either," answered her mother; "for your father and I are going to drive with Mrs. Conyngham. However," she added, "it is quite your own doing; for you could have gone to the little Conyngham's if you had liked."

Alice was silent, but she looked very grave.

"Are the little Conynghams nice?" she asked, presently.

"Yes; they seemed charming children, as far as I could judge from just seeing them for a few minutes in the drawing-room; but Constance will be able to tell you all about them when she comes home."

"Have they got dark hair?" asked Alice, "and how many of them are there? and how old are they? and are they boys or girls?"

"Upon my word, Alice," said her father, "you seem very inquisitive about the little Conynghams, considering you do not wish to know them, and are quite sure you will never like them. However, if you really are anxious to know, you have only got to look out of the window presently, for I heard them arranging with Constance that they would all go into the square."

Then Mrs. Fielding went up to her room to dress for her drive, and Alice followed her.

It certainly was very funny, considering, as Mr. Fielding had said, how very little Alice had cared to make acquaintance with the little Conynghams, that she should be so anxious to see them, and should pop

up and down to the window as many times as she did, while her mother was getting ready, to see if they had arrived in the square.

Presently she heard a carriage stop at the door, and in a few minutes a message was sent up that Mrs. Conyngham had called for Mrs. Fielding.

"Good-bye, Alice, dear," said her mother. "I am afraid you will be very dull by yourself; but remember, it is your own fault."

Alice felt half inclined to ask to be allowed to join the Conynghams and Constance in the square, but could not summon up courage; so she kissed her mamma without speaking, and remained standing by the dressing-table after she was gone, feeling very dull and deserted.

Presently a merry laugh in the square attracted her attention, and she ran to the window. There, first thing, were the fair-haired children playing with the indian-rubber ball, and with an impatient stamp of her foot Alice turned away. She was quite glad now she had not asked her mamma to let her join the little Conynghams. She was quite sure she should have enjoyed no other play while that delicious ball game was going on right under her eyes, nor cared for any companions but the pretty fair-haired children. Besides, she felt rather shy of the little girl now, and had an uncomfortable recollection of the way she had drawn herself up, and said, "We are not allowed to play with any one our mamma does not know." Still, she liked watching them very much, and soon moved to the window again.

Yes, there they were, standing in a sort of ring, throwing the ball from one to the other as fast as possible.

How charming it looked! But stop—there are *four* of them to-day, or is it a friend they have got with them? There are four figures in the ring, and the fourth figure is a new one—a little girl.

How is it that the figure is so familiar to Alice? Why does she seem to know so well the long brown hair, and the hat, and the coat, and everything?

Can it be—is it—it is Constance, her own sister Constance, playing with the fair-haired children, and seeming as friendly as possible.

"Oh! how naughty of Constance," exclaimed Alice; "she has asked them to let her play with them. How could she?" and, forgetting her own recent disobedience in her indignation at her sister's, Alice

ran out of the room with a scarlet face, and dashed down-stairs two steps at a time.

"Mamma—mamma!" she cried, as she caught sight of her mother in the hall just going towards the carriage at the door; "stop a minute. I want to speak to you. Please come up-stairs for a minute."

"All the way up again?" said Mrs. Fielding, smiling; but she made no objection, and followed Alice into the room she had lately quitted.

Breathlessly, Alice dragged her to the window, and pointed to the group in the square.

"Just look! mamma," she said.

But instead of the look of astonishment and displeasure, which Alice expected to see on her mother's face, she saw no change from its usual placid expression, and Mrs. Fielding, after looking all over the square, turned to her, and said, "I don't see anything particular, Alice."

"Why, mamma! just look at Constance! did you ever know *anything* so disobedient——"

"Except yourself this morning," finished Mrs. Fielding; "is that what you were going to say?"

Alice hung her head and blushed. "I forgot," she said.

"But you are mistaken," continued her mother; "Constance is not disobeying me. I only forbid your playing with children I do not know, and I know those little boys and that little girl quite well."

"What, mamma!" exclaimed Alice; "*you* know them?—you know those children with the indian-rubber ball?"

"Yes, Alice," said her mother, laying both her hands on her little daughter's shoulders, and looking into her face with a smile, "I do. Those 'children with the indian-rubber ball,' as you call them, are the little Conynghams."

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

1. Give an instance of the argument in our Lord's Prayer in Luke xxiii. 34, being stated as the reason of forgiveness.
2. Where do we read of marble?
3. The Jews expressed fear of, and yet devotion to, the same land and king.
4. We read in the New Testament the names of men whose acts, but not names, are recorded in the Old.
5. Where is our Saviour called the "Father?"

THE GREATER.



L AID a sprig of mignonette*

Beside the bittercup:†

Both in one vase the same tears wet—

One dried the other up.

* The mignonette kills other flowers, when mixed with them.

† Anemone.

Place this, O heart! thy pain above,

Learn this for thy relief:

The sweetness of Christ's suffering love

Would kill thy bitterest grief.

A. BOND.